

United Nations

Daily Highlights

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W E D N E S D A Y H I G H L I G H T S

- + In Paris, Secretary-General has no comments on today's allied military offensive action against Iraq, as long as he has not received written report from United Nations; United States message delivered today to Secretary-General's office at Headquarters; in letter yesterday, Iraq affirms it does not wish "to have problems" with Security Council; Iraqi incursion into Kuwaiti demilitarized zone continues today.
- + In Paris, Secretary-General says he expects "positive results" in the next few days regarding Geneva talks on Bosnia and Herzegovina; takes part in signing ceremony of Chemical Weapons Treaty; holds talks with number of political leaders.
- + First "hostile actions" against UNTAC personnel in Cambodia; 3 people killed, two injured; investigation underway.
- + Cost of enlargement of UNPROFOR's mandate and strength estimated at about \$695 million, according to Secretary-General's report to the Council.
- + Commission of Inquiry to investigate recent assassination of Bosnian Deputy Prime Minister arrives in Zagreb; to report to Secretary-General by 18 January; Bosnian Ambassador says UNPROFOR offers neither protection nor force; calls for proper political support for UNPROFOR's mission.
- + Mission of medical experts currently in former Yugoslavia to investigate allegations of widespread occurrence of rape, particularly in Bosnia and Herzegovina; findings to be presented to Special Rapporteur on human rights situation in former Yugoslavia.
- + Ambassadors of Member States which contributed troops for UNOSOM and UNITAF briefed today on Somalia; importance of smooth transition from UNITAF to UNOSOM-2 underlined.

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+ Arab States call on Security Council to undertake measures to ensure Israel's compliance with resolution 799 (1993); discuss the "serious consequences" of expulsion by Israel of over 400 Palestinians from occupied territories.

+ Nearly 6,500 Croatians killed, over 23,000 wounded and about 270,000 internally displaced in war in Croatia, says Croatian representative to United Nations.

+ General Assembly to consider admission of Czech and Slovak Republics on 19 January.

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In Paris, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali told reporters that he had no comments on today's allied military offensive action against Iraq, as long as he has not received a written report on the subject from the United Nations. "When I receive the report", he replied, "I will be ready to give you my comments".

In a separate development, the Spokesman for the Secretary-General confirmed to correspondents that United States Ambassador Edward Walker had delivered a message to Secretary-General's Office at Headquarters today. The content of the message was not disclosed.

In a letter, dated 12 January, addressed to the Secretary-General, Iraqi Foreign Minister Mohammed Said Al-Sahaf affirms that his country does not wish to "have problems" with the Security Council. He also affirms Iraq's wish for dialogue with the Council and with "all who so desire" with a view to reaching mutual understanding based on justice, fairness and lawful rights.

If, however, it is the intention of some to pursue a policy of imposition, coercion and the violation of rights and sovereignty, Iraq shall not relinquish and shall not bargain with respect to matters affecting the defence of its sovereignty and its legitimate rights, warned the Iraqi Foreign Minister.

Last Monday, the Security Council condemned Iraqi incursions into the Kuwaiti side of the demilitarized zone; expressed alarm at Iraq's refusal to allow the United Nations to transport the Special Commission (UNSCOM) and Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM) personnel into Iraqi territory using its own aircraft; and demanded that Iraq cooperate fully with all the United Nations agencies and relevant resolutions. The Council also warned Iraq of serious consequences that would flow from such continued defiance.

The Iraqi incursions into the Kuwaiti side of the demilitarized zone continued today, according to the Spokesman for the Secretary-General. The United Nations observers who were at the scene took no action to stop those crossing the border.

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On the first of his two-day visit to Paris, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali told reporters today that he believed that there would be "positive results" in the next few days regarding the Geneva peace talks on Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Arriving in the French capital to take part in the signing ceremony of the Chemical Weapons Treaty - which was held at the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Headquarters - Mr. Boutros-Ghali also held a series of meetings with a number of political leaders.

The Secretary-General met with his Special Representative to the Multilateral Peace Talks in the Middle East, Mr. Chinmaya Gharekhan, after which he had a luncheon meeting with Emilio Colombo, the Foreign Minister of Italy.

The Secretary-General later met with the United States Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger for discussions within the context of continuing consultations and cooperation between United States and the United Nations. Mr. Boutros-Ghali characterized the talks as "very constructive and very positive". The two discussed the situation in Somalia, Libya and the former Yugoslavia.

Mr. Boutros-Ghali later meet with Shimon Peres, Foreign Minister of Israel.

The Secretary-General was scheduled to attend a dinner hosted by French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas. He will continue his visit to Paris tomorrow.

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Two Cambodian nationals with the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) and a seven-year-old local girl were killed and several other UNTAC personnel were injured when an unidentified group of about 40 people attacked a village with rockets and automatic weapons in the district capital of Siem Reap in Cambodia last night.

According to the Spokesman for UNTAC, the attackers fired at the tent used for electoral registration and several houses inhabited by UNTAC personnel and Cambodian civilians.

The residence of three Japanese police officers was burned to the ground but "fortunately" was uninhabited at the time of the attack. The attackers also ransacked the residences of an Indian and a Ghanian police officer, who were injured in the attack, the Spokesman said.

The Spokesman said that this was the first time UNTAC personnel had died because of "hostile actions" in Cambodia.

A complete investigation of the incident was underway.

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In a separate development, it was announced today that Barbara Hendricke, Ambassador of Goodwill for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), would fly to Phnom Penh tomorrow, on a three-day visit to underline the plight of victims of deadly land mines in Cambodia.

During her visit, the American opera singer will meet with officials of UNHCR, the Cambodian Mine Action Centre and the French Relief Handicap International.

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The costs associated with the additional responsibilities of monitoring crossing-points on the borders of Bosnia and Herzegovina with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) would amount to about \$695 million for an initial six-month period, according to a further report of the Secretary-General on the financial implications of the proposal to enlarge the mandate and strength of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR).

It is estimated that the monthly cost thereafter will be approximately \$69 million.

The Secretary-General says he would recommend to the General Assembly that, should the Security Council decide to approve the proposed course of action and enlarge the mandate and strength of UNPROFOR, the additional costs relating thereto should be considered an expense of the Organization to be borne by Member States. Further, the assessments to be levied on Member States should be credited to the UNPROFOR special account, the report states.

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The Commission of Inquiry appointed by Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali to investigate the assassination last week of a Deputy Prime Minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Hakiya Turajlic, while in the protection of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR), travelled to Zagreb today, according to the Secretary-General's Spokesman.

The Commission, which is jointly headed by Sahabzada Yakub-Khan, a former Foreign Minister of Pakistan and currently serving as the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Western Sahara, and Lieutenant-General Lars-Eric Wahlgren (Sweden), Commander of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), met in Zagreb with General Satish Nambiar, the Commander of UNPROFOR.

The Spokesman told correspondents at Headquarters that the Commission was "authorized to make contacts as necessary with the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Bosnian-Serb leadership, UNPROFOR Force Commander and personnel and any other contacts as needed."

He said the Commission's goal is to establish facts and circumstances of what happened, to study procedures that were used and see whether they were appropriate under the circumstances, and also to make recommendations.

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The Commission is to report to the Secretary-General no later than 18 January.

In a separate development, the Bosnian Ambassador to the United Nations, Muhamed Sacirbey, said in a letter to the Secretary-General that the "astonishing circumstances" leading to the murder of his country's Deputy Prime Minister, while under the protection of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR), demonstrated that UNPROFOR offered neither protection nor force.

Ambassador Sacirbey said that UNPROFOR unfortunately "labors under a constricted mandate, passive rules of engagement and inadequate political support". Those factors had proven to be "grossly counterproductive, permitting occupation forces to use UNPROFOR" as an unwitting vehicle of aggression against Bosnia and Herzegovina, he said.

He pointed out that the murder of the Deputy Prime Minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina on a road controlled by UNPROFOR "demonstrated the necessity of correcting UNPROFOR's mandate and rules of engagement and of obtaining proper political support for its work" if it were to function as a genuine protection force.

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A team of medical and psychiatric experts, accompanied by staff of the Centre for Human Rights, left Geneva yesterday to investigate allegations of the widespread occurrence of rape, which are being made particularly in relation to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The purpose of the mission, arranged by the Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in the territory of former Yugoslavia, Tadeusz Mazowiecki, is to examine allegations of rape in the former Yugoslavia and, in particular, to receive and analyse the testimony of victims, witnesses and credible sources. The findings will be forwarded to the Special Rapporteur, who will present his report to the Commission at its forty-ninth session in February.

The team, which is scheduled to return on 22 January, intends to spend the greater part of the time in Zagreb and Belgrade. However, should conditions permit, they may also visit places in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The inquiry by the team of experts will be conducted in parallel to the Special Rapporteur's own visit to the former Yugoslavia currently in progress. That visit will conclude on 16 January.

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Under-Secretary-General for Peace-keeping Operations, Marrack Goulding, chaired a briefing this morning for Ambassadors of Member States who contributed troops to the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) and the Unified Task Force (UNITAF). The Ambassadors were briefed on all aspects of

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the current operation in Somalia, the efforts to create a secure environment throughout the country and a joint United Nations-United States planning for a phased handover to UNOSOM-2.

The briefing underlined the importance of a smooth and seamless transition from UNITAF to UNOSOM-2 and also emphasized the importance Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali attached to the re-building of Somali institutions, including the re-establishment of an indigenous police force as soon as possible.

Among others who also briefed the Ambassadors included Kofi Annan, Assistant-Secretary-General for Peace-keeping Operations; United States Ambassador Brandon Grove, Chairman of the State Department Task Force on Somalia; Rear-Admiral Frank Bowman, Deputy Director for Political Military Affairs and Strategic Planning and Policy Affairs Director, Joint Staff at the Pentagon; and General Morris Baril, Military Advisor, Department of Peace-keeping Operations.

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A delegation representing the Arab States at the United Nations, headed by Libya, the current Chairman of the Arab Group, met with the President of the Security Council, Yoshio Hatano (Japan), this morning to discuss the "serious consequences" of Israel's expulsion of more than 400 Palestinian civilians from the occupied Palestinian territories last month.

The delegation transmitted to Mr. Hatano a text of the resolution adopted by the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Arab States at its extraordinary session held in Cairo on 11 and 12 January.

The resolution, inter alia, calls upon the Security Council to undertake measures to ensure Israel's compliance with the immediate implementation of Security Council Resolution 799 (1992), including the application of the provisions of Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter.

It also calls upon the United Nations to establish an appropriate mechanism with a view of implementing the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, particularly through appointing an international Power to provide protection for the civilians in the occupied Arab and Palestinian territories. Further, the resolution calls upon the Council to take immediate measures in order to secure delivery of necessary relief supplies via the occupied Palestinian territories to the expelled Palestinians.

Ambassadors of Egypt, Lebanon, the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations and the League of Arab States were present at the meeting with Mr. Hatano.

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About 6,500 Croats, including nearly 2,200 civilians, were killed and over 23,000 civilians and members of the defence forces were wounded in the

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war in Croatia, according to records of the Information and Research Department, Ministry of Health, of the Republic of Croatia, as submitted to the United Nations by that country's permanent mission.

Based on testimonials by eyewitnesses who survived the massacres, it is estimated that at least 1,000 Croatian civilians, mostly elderly, have been massacred, summarily executed or brutally killed by Serbian paramilitary forces, said Vladimir Drobnjak, Chargé d'affaires of Croatia to the United Nations, in a letter addressed to the President of the Security Council, this week.

Until 6 December 1992, Mr. Drobnjak writes, about 269,000 persons within the borders of Croatia have been registered as displaced, and 426,000 coming from the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina have been granted refugee status. The total number of displaced persons and refugees is almost 700,000.

According to the lists of missing persons kept by the Croatian Red Cross there are nearly 14,000 people still missing.

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The General Assembly will meet next Tuesday morning to consider the admission of two new members, the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic, according to a United Nations Spokesman.

This action follows a recommendation by the Security Council that these two countries be admitted to United Nations membership. Admission of the two Republics will bring to 180 the total membership of the United Nations.

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